

RESOURCES

NATURE, HISTORY AND HORTICULTURE IN FAIRFAX COUNTY

VOLUME 5, NO. 3 SUMMER 2005

OX HILL BATTLEFIELD PARK

Here in Fairfax County, where so much of our nation's story has played out over the centuries, roadways, malls and housing — representing the very prosperity for which our forefathers worked and fought — replaced (and displaced) villages, farmlands and meadows, and at Ox Hill, much of the hallowed ground of a Civil War battlefield.

Only a small section of the original battlefield remains, about five acres saved from the jaws of progress by Civil War preservationists in the 1980s. After all, the Battle of Ox Hill (also known as the Battle of Chantilly) wasn't just a skirmish, it was a major battle — right here in Fairfax County — where more than 20,000 Union and Confederate troops clashed during a fierce thunderstorm. The casualties ran high — 516 Confederate and an estimated 1000 Union troops killed or wounded. Among those who died were two Union generals, Isaac Stevens and Philip Kearny. Today, two granite markers memorialize their sacrifice. The markers were erected in 1915 on land deeded by John Ballard, a former Confederate cavalryman.

Ox Hill Battlefield Park lies near the intersection of West Ox Road and Monument Drive, surrounded by commercial and private development.

Each year on Memorial Day, folks gather at Ox Hill for a wreath-laying ceremony. This year, three color guards took part: the Ancient Order of Hibernians, reenactors from the Fairfax Rifles Living History Society (the 17th Virginia Infantry) portraying Confederate soldiers, and the 28th Massachusetts Infantry portraying Union soldiers.

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Civil War reenactors at Ox Hill Battlefield Park.

Granite markers herald the sacrifice of Union Generals Isaac Stevens and Philip Kearny. Kearny served in the Mexican War with Robert E. Lee, who mourned his death and promptly returned his body to the Union side.



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Are You New to Fairfax County?

Discover our area's beautiful forests, gardens and historical sites. What better way to enjoy our county's rich history and natural resources? When you visit our county parks, you become part of them and begin your own family history in Northern Virginia.

What's RMD?

RMD stands for Resource Management Division. It is the part of the Park Authority responsible for natural, historical and horticultural resources.

RESOURCES

Editor/Writer: Natasha Peterson
Photos: Don Sweeney
Administration: Erin Silks, Linda Crone
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NATURE AND HISTORY SUMMER CAMPS

For Glorious Summer Days

No child should grow up without a few summer days exploring the woods or experiencing the wistful joy of the olden days. Here are some of the delightful camps the county offers for children at our beautiful county parks. (So much fun, they won't even miss their computers!)

For more information about these wonderful camps including dates and times, call **703-481-9444** (Katydid Inc). To register, call **703-222-4664**.

You can also register online by going to www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/rec/funcamps.htm and click on Nature Camps or Specialty Camps.

For some camps as noted below, register by calling the park directly.



Tracks Through Nature & History (6-10 yrs)

At Riverbend Park (Great Falls) and Ellanor C. Lawrence Park (Chantilly)

These parks are a natural summer wonderland for children. Each park's rich resources — woodland trails, streams, ponds, wildlife and gardens, are waiting to be explored in this unique camping adventure. Camp forms are available online (see above). Bring lunch and drink. (Read more about Riverbend on p.6)

Tracks Through Nature & History (3-5 yrs) At Riverbend Park (Great Falls)

Young children will get a chance to enjoy nature through exciting daily themes and activities including songs, games, crafts, hikes and stories. Children must be potty trained and three-years-old by June 1st.



Wild Wednesdays (8-12 yrs) Riverbend Park (Great Falls)

Riverbend also has a summer program called Wild Wednesdays (on alternate Wednesdays), beginning July 6 through August 17 (except July 27) from 9:30am-3pm. Each week has new focus and a new way to explore Riverbend. You can register for one or all the programs. (\$29/program). To register, call Riverbend Park at 703-759-9018.

July 6 – *Wet and Wild*

July 13 – *Animal Vets*

July 20 – *Hike to Great Falls*

August 3 – *Insect Safari*

August 10 – *Fishing Fun*

August 17 – *Birding*

Local Heritage Camp (6-10 yrs) At Colvin Run Mill Historic Site (Great Falls)

Campers will step back in time to the 19th century and a community centered around an operating gristmill. Activities include playing old-fashioned games, cranking homemade ice cream, history scavenger hunts, tours of the historic building, crafts and baking using the flour ground at the mill. Activities are the same session to session. No camp on July 4th.

Rockhounds Camp (6-8 yrs) At Hidden Pond Nature Center (Springfield)

Rockhounds Camp is an Earth Science related camp that will feature rock collecting, identification, soil studies and other related subjects to this field of study. July 25-29, 3-6pm. Cost is \$85. To register, call Hidden Pond at 703-451-9588.

Hidden Pond Explorers (7-9 yrs)
At Hidden Pond Nature Center
(Springfield)

Hidden Pond Explorers is a multisubject nature study that will have participants get an in-depth look at reptiles, amphibians, fish, mammals and birds. August 1-5, 3-6pm. Cost is \$85. To register, call Hidden Pond at 703-451-9588.

Young Pioneer Camp (6-10 yrs)
At Frying Pan Park (Herndon)

Jump back in time to a working farm of the 1930s! Campers will get a unique experience as they enjoy new themes, crafts, games, hikes, cooking projects and more. Children will be introduced to goat milking, animal grooming and other hands-on demonstrations. Activities are the same each session. Children must have completed kindergarten. Two-week camps offered at a great discount.

Fun on the Farm (3-5 yrs)
At Frying Pan Park (Herndon)

Preschoolers are introduced to a 1930s working farm. Activities include visits with the farm animals, nature walks, arts and crafts, songs and games. New themes this year! Held at the Old Floris Schoolhouse on the park grounds. Children must be potty trained and three-years-old by June 1st. No camp on July 4th.

Animals in Fact and Fable (4-5 yrs)
At Hidden Oaks Nature Center (Annandale)

Offered July 13-15 from 10am to noon, campers will explore animals in fact and fiction. Each camper will adopt a caterpillar to release as a butterfly as they discover the wonders of metamorphosis with activities and crafts. The \$60 camp fee includes all program costs and snack. To register, call Hidden Oaks at 703-941-1065.



Dino Days (4-6 yrs)
At Hidden Oaks Nature Center
(Annandale)

Dinosaurs roar onto the scene at Hidden Oaks during Dino Days camp from August 1-4 from 10am-noon. Naturalists will guide campers with activities and crafts, plus campers receive a fossil from North America and learn about these exciting creatures through stories, songs and stream explorations. Cost is \$80. To register, call Hidden Oaks at 703-941-1065.

Hidden Oaks' Outdoor Adventures (12-15 yrs)
At Hidden Oaks Nature Center (Annandale)

July 18-22 from 9am to 3pm. Youth will explore the great outdoors from the Potomac River at Great Falls, VA to Bull Run in Centreville. Campers will navigate a woodland compass course, bicycle along a stream valley trail and canoe the marshes of Lake Accotink. Science and history come alive through hiking, orienteering, wildlife observation and journal writing as campers discover watersheds and geology. The \$125 camp fee includes van transportation to excursion locations. Advanced registration required. To register, call Hidden Oaks at 703-941-1065.



**Equal Access/
 Special Accommodations**

The Fairfax County Park Authority is committed to equal access in all programs and services. Special accommodations will be provided upon request. Please call the ADA/Access coordinator at 703-324-8563, at least 10 working days in advance of the date services are needed.

ADA/Access Coordinator
703-324-8563
TTY 703-803-3354
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/ada.htm

Burke Lake Park
 7315 Ox Road, Fairfax Station
 Call 703-323-6600

Colvin Run Mill
 10017 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls
 Call 703-759-2771

Ellanor C. Lawrence Park
 5040 Walney Road, Chantilly
 Call 703-631-0013

Frying Pan Park
 2709 West Ox Road, Herndon
 Call 703-437-9101

Green Spring Gardens Park
 4603 Green Spring Rd., Alexandria
 Call 703-642-5173

Hidden Oaks Nature Center
 7701 Royce Street, Annandale
 Call 703-941-1065

Hidden Pond Nature Center
 8511 Greeley Blvd., Springfield
 Call 703-451-9588

Huntley Meadows Park
 3701 Lockheed Blvd., Alexandria
 Call 703-768-2525

Lake Accotink Park
 7500 Accotink Park Rd., Springfield
 Call 703-569-3464

Lake Fairfax Park
 1400 Lake Fairfax Drive, Reston
 Call 703-471-5414

Riverbend Park
 8700 Potomac Hills Street
 Great Falls
 Call 703-759-9018

Sully Historic Site
 Sully Road, Chantilly
 Call 703-437-1794

Need directions or more information? VISIT www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks

OX HILL *continued from page 1*

And this year, the ceremony focused not only on the past — but the future. The Master Plan to renovate the Park has been completed and the Interpretive Plan and Design are underway. Now, Ox Hill Battlefield Park is getting some needed and well-deserved attention. The park is being designed and interpreted by the Fairfax County Park Authority with guidance from the Chantilly Battlefield Association and a citizen's task force, formed during the Master Plan Process.

Elizabeth Crowell, who heads up the Cultural Resource section of the Park Authority, comments: *"We're very excited to have the opportunity to work with the Chantilly Battlefield Association on this important interpretive project for the park, which is a stop on the Civil War Trails. The interpretive additions and other restorations will make its history much more accessible and alive for county citizens and visitors."*

Some of the plans for the park include:

- ★ A kiosk that will provide information about the Battle of Ox Hill (Chantilly) and other related Civil War Sites.
- ★ Interpretive signs to help inform visitors about the battle, including an artist's rendering of the battle scene.
- ★ Monuments to commemorate both the Union and Confederate soldiers who fought in the battle, including a list of their regiments and brigades.
- ★ Trails and benches.
- ★ Restoration of the landscape, so that it will more closely resemble what it looked like in 1862. This will include the removal of brush and the replanting of the farm field.
- ★ Reconstruction of the zig-zag rail fences that bordered what was once the cornfield and woods.
- ★ A small parking area.

Edward T. Wenzel of the Chantilly Battlefield Association has been involved with Ox Hill's preservation efforts since 1986. In a recent report about Ox Hill Battlefield Park, he summarizes the significance of the battle and the importance of historical preservation for every community:

"Here we have the largest and probably the most significant historical event ever to occur in the county of Fairfax, yet when you mention it to most people, they give you a blank stare. Few know that in the early September days of 1862, Gen. Robert E. Lee's entire Army of Northern Virginia was in the county, between Ox Hill and Chantilly; or that Union Gen. John Pope's Army of Virginia, with attached units from Gen. McClellan's Army of the Potomac, were in retreat from Centreville to Fairfax and Alexandria."

During those critical days of September, 1862, when the Federal government in Washington was in a state of panic, at least 150,000 troops of both sides with hundreds of artillery pieces and thousands of horses, mules and wagons were in motion within the county. And then there were thousands of maimed and wounded soldiers clustered about St. Mary's church at Fairfax Station being ministered to by Clara Barton and other nurses and surgeons as they awaited the locomotives and box cars that would take them to hospitals in Alexandria and Washington.

"Here we have the largest and probably the most significant historical event ever to occur in the county of Fairfax, yet when you mention it to most people, they give you a blank stare."

The Civil War had come to Fairfax County in full force in September, 1862. As the Ox Hill/Chantilly battle became the end of the Second Manassas Campaign, it also signaled the start of the Maryland Campaign that would take many of these same soldiers across the Potomac River to South Mountain, Harper's Ferry, Antietam and Sharpsburg where tens of thousands more would fight and die in the horrific sectional struggle that was the Civil War.



It's only through education and outreach to the community that we can preserve our heritage. Perhaps if more people in the 1970s and 1980s had known about the bloody Ox Hill battle and its role in the Civil War, then more of the battlefield and Fairfax County's heritage could have been saved. When heritage clashes with development interests, it's our duty and responsibility as citizens, including county planners and supervisors, to protect the common heritage from unnecessary destruction. These places, these touchstones of our past make our county unique and build pride in the community."

Read about Mt. Air on p.8.

Certification Puts Stamp of Approval on Heritage Interpreters

Heritage Interpretation? *What's that?*



With their impressive breadth of knowledge and skills, heritage interpreters make our visits to nature centers and historic sites engaging and provocative.

Here, Yvonne Johnson teaches children about America's farming tradition at Frying Pan Park.

Well, it goes something like this. You visit a nature center and look at the surrounding woods. Then the interpreter comes out and chats with you. The next thing you know, those mere woods transform into a place that's full of LIFE, where you can see and hear the call of the wild, feel the seasonal rhythms, and enjoy a greater sense of your relationship and connection to this valuable, living resource. Thank you, interpreter.

Heritage interpretation in parks and museums is a respected, worldwide vocation that has its own demanding standards for professional certification. It even has a professional organization called the National Association for Interpretation (NAI). Here in Fairfax County, we are fortunate to have as many certified interpreters as we do, and we get the benefits of their impressive breadth of knowledge and skills. In fact, our Volunteer, Interpretive and Program Services Manager, Mona Enquist-Johnston, is nationally recognized for her excellence.

Adding to the eight interpreters already certified, five more Park Authority staffers received professional certification from NAI this past spring. To do this, they all received extensive training, passed rigorous exams and demonstrated their skills through presentations and video. So when you next see them in the parks, extend your hearty thanks and congratulations!

NAI

Certified Interpretive Guides

- Sherry Bizette, Frying Pan Park
- Jaime Brooks, Ellanor C. Lawrence Park
- Tammy Loxton, Sully Historic Site
- John Reinhart, Hidden Oaks Nature Center
- Nicole Reintsma, Riverbend Park
- Debbie Waugh, Green Spring Gardens

Certified Heritage Interpreter

- Mary Allen, Colvin Run Mill Historic Site
- Kitty Keller, Huntley Meadows Park
- Karen Sheffield, Riverbend Park

Certified Interpretive Manager

- John Callow, Riverbend Park
- Yvonne Johnson, Frying Pan Park
- John Shafer, Hidden Oaks Nature Center

Certified Interpretive Trainer

- Mona Enquist-Johnston, Manager of Volunteer, Interpretive and Program Services

Riverbend Park's Top Ten

By Marty Smith, Manager

Nature in all its ferocious beauty. Creation in full throttle sporting rare wildflowers, birds, trees and wildlife. Here, northern and southern plant communities clash and converge with woods and flood plains and dreamy riverside serenity. Nestled in a bend of the nation's river in the mighty Potomac Gorge, it is here that every season brings drama and surprise to staff and visitors alike. We must be talking about Riverbend Park.



1 *The Potomac Gorge*

With 2.5 miles of riverfront, Riverbend is a fully staffed Fairfax County park on the Potomac Gorge. It features 409 acres of steep valleys off the flood plain, meadows, ponds and a deeply wooded canopy that has almost a tropical feeling. Here, wildlife finds sanctuary, and globally rare plants thrive.

2 *Orioles and Eagles*

At the front desk in Riverbend's Visitor Center, there's a birding journal where birders tell of their glorious sightings - vireos, cuckoos, cerulean warblers, common golden eyes, cuckoos and the Baltimore oriole, just for starters. Riverbend is a regional hot spot for migratory birds, and in spring and fall, it's show time. In autumn, you can see the raptors including peregrines and the great bald eagle. (Go on a guided bird walk - there's lots of them.)



3 *Five Pounders*

Fishing at Riverbend Park might just get you a sunfish, catfish or a mighty fine five-pound smallmouth bass (the park encourages catch and release fishing). You and your family can take a boat out on the river or enjoy riverside fishing. Fishing tackle is available at the Visitor Center, including lures for bass and sunfish, plastic worms, fishing line, hooks, weights, bobbers and children's fishing rods. However, the park doesn't sell fishing licenses. You have to get that before you visit (fishing licenses are required for ages 16 and older).

4 *Canoes and Kayaks*

Taking a boat out on the Potomac River is a real joy. The islands dotting the river provide opportunities to see wildlife. There are some small ripples and class one rapids, and a dangerous dam one mile down river from the boat ramp - so boaters, beware! Since neither water skiing nor jet skis are allowed, peacefulness prevails as you canoe, kayak or fish from a jon boat, or enjoy a guided kayak tour with one of Riverbend's naturalists.



5 *A President's Midnight Escape from the Enemy*

History? You bet. President James Madison retreated to what is now Riverbend after the British burned down the White House. There, he spent the night and crossed the Potomac to escape. So for one night, Riverbend was the "seat of government."

6 *Picnics and Outdoor Programs*

Have a picnic near the river where there are tables and grills. Enjoy a relaxing art class or rigorous exercise class at Riverbend Park. It's a double-treat in Riverbend's rich setting. The park's creative staff have come up with all sorts of terrific classes and programs that all ages will enjoy.

7 *Try a Little Nightlife (with Bats and Owls)*

In addition to its numerous scout, school programs and other daytime activities, Riverbend offers fascinating and fun campfire programs down by the riverside with live animal demonstrations and master storytellers. The park's astronomy programs and guided night walks are also extraordinary, sure to engage even the family sourpuss.



8 *The Rappahannock Drummers and Dancers*

American Indian life is a big part of Riverbend's story, as evidenced by archaeological sites and artifacts. In honor of its Native American history, Riverbend produces the annual (and very popular) Virginia Indian Festival in the fall, where the Rappahannock drummers and dancers captivate the crowd.

9 *Otters, Mink and Turtles*

Salamanders, snakes, muskrat, voles, beavers and fox. And maybe even a bobcat or two. Common, rare and oddly unique species (some of which baffle even the scientific community) all find sanctuary in Riverbend. The park even offers a "Sponsor an Animal" program for its display critters.



10 *Over 10 Miles of Happy Trails*

To name just a few, the park includes both the nationally revered



Potomac Gorge Interpretive Trail and the Potomac Heritage Scenic Trail, plus the community favorite (to the tune of 100,000

hikers per year), the 1.75-mile trail that links the Great Falls National Park Visitor Center to the Riverbend Visitor Center.

Care for Riverbend. Become a Volunteer and Friend.

The Riverbend Park family of naturalists, interpreters, friends and volunteers is an energetic, arty and brainy crew with lots to do taking care of the park and its visitors. If you would like to become part of this great team, join as a volunteer. For more information, call Erin Chernisky at 703-324-8750. To join Friends of Riverbend Park, call the park or visit www.forb.org.



Riverbend Park is located at 8700 Potomac Hills Street in Great Falls. Take Beltway Exit 44 onto Georgetown Pike west to a right on Riverbend Road. From Riverbend Road turn right on Jeffery Road and follow for approximately one mile to the park entrance.



- ▶ For more information, visit fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend/ or call the park at 703-759-9018.
- ▶ The park is open daily from 7am to dusk, and the Visitor Center is open 9am-5pm weekdays and noon to 5pm on weekends, closed on Tuesdays. Please call ahead for holiday hours.

Colonial-era carvings, dishes, and toys; Civil War prints, photographs, and uniforms; 19th-century quilts, tools, sleds and more... The Fairfax County Park Authority has more than 6,000 historic objects under its stewardship in Museum Collections. So how on earth do they keep track of them all? Jeanne Niccolls, manager of Museum Collections, offers some insight on how they succeed in doing a seemingly impossible task.

Keeping Track of Historic Collections

By Jeanne Niccolls, Collections Manager

By using a structured, detailed process, we're able to follow each object and the collection it belongs to, whether it's on exhibit or in storage at over 113 areas at 21 sites around the county. Or as Susan Clark, assistant Collections Manager says, "It's all right at our fingertips."

To start, all of the information about each object is recorded electronically by using a software program which is specially designed for managing museum collections. Each object is assigned its own unique identification number. That number is applied to the object, a photograph of the object, all its associated documents and its individual computer record.



The connection between this number and its associated documents and photographs allows Park Authority museum collections staff to keep track of all 6,000+ objects. When objects are moved from one place to another, the computer record is updated. Not only that, the staff carefully inspects the objects and conducts an extensive annual inventory, supported by the computer program, to ensure the Park Authority maintains accountability for its museum collections.

Being able to efficiently account for collections is an important requirement for museum accreditation by the American Association of Museums, which upholds professional standards.

Fairfax County Park Authority has three accredited museums: Colvin Run Mill Historic Site, Green Spring Gardens and Sully Historic Site.

If you would like to volunteer with Museum Collections or learn more, call Susan Clark at 703-631-9743, or email susan.clark@fairfaxcounty.gov



Caps off to Jeanne Niccolls, who recently received the 2005 Excellence in Peer Review Service Award from the American Association of Museums for her work in the Museum Assessment Program (MAP) and Accreditation Program.

MOUNT AIR

In addition to plans to interpret Ox Hill, the Cultural Resource Management and Protection Section of the Park Authority has been hard at work at another park that is of historical interest. Mount Air, in the Mount Vernon District of the county, includes the archaeological remains of a house that dates to the mid-18th century. It was the home of Dennis McCarty and was occupied until it caught fire in 1992. The Cultural Resource Management and Protection Section is now preparing interpretive signs and has prepared an excellent exhibit on Mt. Air, including photographs and artifacts currently being displayed at the Fairfax County Government Center, Monday through Friday from 8am to 5pm. The park will open to the public later this year.

Dragonflies loom large as delightful, whimsical creatures across the planet. They are a popular motif for everything from bejeweled pins to wallpaper, and they appear frequently in both folklore and modern literature as symbols of illusions, omens and messengers, among others. Jewelry and mythology aside, a fantasia of real dragonflies abounds in Fairfax County's Riverbend Park. Thanks to the park's staff and volunteers, an ongoing study to discover and document its dragonfly population was initiated four years ago, producing startling results.

Riverbend Park's Dragonfly Study

By Karen Sheffield, Senior Interpreter



Four years ago, naturalists and volunteers at Riverbend Park began dragonfly observation as a casual interest. Noting dragonflies of varied colors (with equally colorful

names), we quickly realized that Riverbend is home to many dragonfly species. With that, a formal study was born, which continues today.

For the study, volunteers collect cast skins (exoskeletons) or net and identify adults. This spring alone, we've recorded two new species in the park (ashy clubtail and twin-spotted spiketail) bringing the total confirmed dragonfly species to 34 plus a few high-flying suspects that require more identification research. With 2.5 miles of Potomac River shoreline at the park and an abundance of ponds and streams, we suspect many more dragonfly species are yet to be recorded in the park.

Dragonflies are life-long predators, although they are harmless to humans. They spend a few weeks to five years in the water as larvae and up to nine months as adults, depending on species and the availability of food. The shortest lifespan for a dragonfly upon becoming an adult (if it doesn't get eaten) is around five weeks. Dragonflies have survived on earth for millions of years; and some fossils have displayed wingspans over two feet.

Many species are habitat specific and require unpolluted aquatic environments such as seeps, streams and ponds to survive. Because of this, some species of dragonflies tend to be valuable indicators of wetland and waterway health.

"We have discovered that Riverbend is home to more than 10% of the dragonfly species in the whole of North America."

Riverbend Park hosts a variety of wetland and meadow habitats that attract dragonflies. Of the dragonfly species that have been recorded to date, 30% of them are considered rare in Virginia or

are watch-listed species. We have discovered that Riverbend is home to more than 10% of the dragonfly species in the whole of North America.

This past season produced some great observations. The spine-crowned clubtail, which is a rare species globally and very rare in Virginia, had historically been recorded from only two locations along the Potomac River. But this season, for the first time in 25 years, the spine-crowned clubtail was documented along the Potomac at Riverbend Park, also making this the first recorded sighting in Fairfax County.

The past four years have focused on documenting dragonflies at ponds, a vernal pool and a portion of the Potomac River. Seeps and park streams remain to be studied in coming years. These environments are favorable to specific dragonflies, many of which are state listed. This will be the focus of the 2005 study.

Much thanks goes out to all of the volunteers, Riverbend and Park Authority staff, and to Richard Orr who has verified several challenging adult species and cast skins. Our project volunteers include Edward Chein, Ryan Meczowski, Nagma Malik, Lydia Lanni, Ellie Clark, Kit Sheffield, Andrea Menzo, Lynn Mobley and the Riverbend Dragonfly Survey Group.*

***The Riverbend Dragonfly Survey Group helps to conduct the annual dragonfly survey. It's open to the public and if you would like to join them, call the park at 703-759-9018.**

Some Rare Species of Dragonflies Found in Riverbend Park

To see the full study and report, go to fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/resources

Common Name

arrow clubtail
cherry-faced meadowhawk
cyrano darner
elusive clubtail/ russet-tipped
Laura's clubtail
midland clubtail
ocellated darner
spine-crowned clubtail
stygian shadowdragon

umber shadowdragon

Scientific Name

Stylurus spiniceps
Sympetrum internum
Nasiaeschna pentacantha
Stylurus notatus/plagiatus
Stylurus laurae
Gomphus fraternus
Boyeria grafiana
Gomphus abbreviatus
Neurocordulia
yamaskanensis
Neurocordulia obsoleta

NEXTEL VOLUNTEERS RAKE IT IN

by Mary Allen

Ray Nazzal from Nextel called Colvin Run Mill looking for a group volunteer opportunity. We looked at our winter-weary gardens and assured him that we could use lots of help to spruce up for spring.

Eleven Nextel employees arrived on Friday, April 15, armed with gloves, tools and lots of enthusiasm. Site volunteer Barbara Raymond came in to guide their efforts. Loading and reloading the wheelbarrow with mulch, some of the group set off to refresh the nature path, clearing intruding tree limbs and raking in fresh mulch. Others, armed with rakes, made quick work of winter's deposit of leaves in the formal gardens and in the landscaped areas leading to the general store. At the end of the day, the group had collected over 20 bags of leaves and weeds, mulched much of the nature path and planted some colorful annuals. What a difference they made in just one day!

Mary Allen is a Certified Heritage Interpreter and the Volunteer Coordinator for Colvin Run Mill Historic Site.



A group of Nextel Volunteers enjoy some fresh air helping out at Colvin Run Mill.

Were You an Outdoors Kind of Kid?

When you were little, did you love running around outside wild and happy with your friends? Did you love exploring the woods, tuned in to the bugs, trees and animals? Did you love telling stories around the campfire about days of yore? *Was that a resounding YES?*

Then you may be a natural-born park volunteer and/or heritage interpreter. When you volunteer, you join hundreds of dedicated (and fun!) folks who share your passion for nature and Virginia's rich history. Call your local park listed on page 2, or call/email the following Volunteer Coordinators:

Volunteering — erin.chernisky@fairfaxcounty.gov, 703-324-8750

Interpretive Services — mona.enquist-johnston@fairfaxcounty.gov,
703-324-8750

Archaeology and Collections Cultural Resource

Protection — robert.wharton@fairfaxcounty.gov, 703-534-3881

Master Gardeners Program — Community Horticulture,
703-642-0128

Start a Business Partnership with Our Nature Centers and Historic Sites

For county businesses, it's a joy to be involved with our nature centers and historic sites, bringing **BENEFITS** not only to the parks, but to employees (they love it!) and the bottom line through strong community citizenship. In addition to sending an employee team to a park like Nextel did, here are some additional ways -- large and small -- business has partnered with county parks:

- ◇ McDonald's Corporation sponsors summer's Arts-in-the Parks.
- ◇ Whole Foods of Springfield partners with the Wildlife Habitat Garden at Hidden Pond Nature Center and provides space for the Nature Center's outreach programs at the store.
- ◇ Datatel supports wildlife and history projects at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park.
- ◇ The Wild Bird Center partners with Huntley Meadows Park (a wetlands sanctuary) by providing bird seed and feeders.
- ◇ BB&T helps to support to our Volunteer Program.

Employee teams can also build wildlife habitats, do stream monitoring, help our heritage experts with Civil War archaeology and support popular events such as the Antique Car Show, or your company can become a corporate **PARK FOUNDATION** donor (including donating historic and conservation easements) that help to protect our county heritage.

To learn more and start your partnership, call your neighborhood park (see p. 2) or contact Erin Silks, administrative assistant for the Park Authority's Resource Management Division, erin.silks@fairfaxcounty.gov, 703-324-8671. We hope you'll call today.

DISPOSING OF INVASIVE PLANTS

Invasive plants are a big problem in Fairfax County. By definition, they take over the environment, "hogging" all the resources and crowding out or destroying native plants and the animals that depend on them. Fortunately, many homeowners have recognized the problem and are doing their stewardship share by removing invasive plants from their property. But how to dispose of invasive plants? The following question about this matter was received over the Internet at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/resources



Question:

I am in the process of pulling out all of the non-native ivy planted in my backyard by a previous owner. As I have first-hand experience with the invasiveness and difficulty of removal, I'm concerned about how to dispose of it. I don't think I am allowed to burn brush in Fairfax County. I'm afraid to throw it on the curb to be sent to the landfill since I don't want to spread it around. What would you recommend?

— Concerned Homeowner



Answer:

Dear Concerned Homeowner:

All yard debris collected from residences at the county is recycled in one of two ways:

Woody materials are taken to the solid waste management complex on West Ox Road in Fairfax where it is chipped into mulch. This mulch is available free to county residents at no charge but the resident must pick up the mulch for use. For information about how to get mulch, please call 703-324-5995. The soft vegetative material is taken to either of two composting facilities in Prince William County where it is composted and then sold as a soil substitute. These composting facilities are not owned or operated by Fairfax County. The Fairfax County Solid Waste Management Program recommends that your yard debris be placed at the curb for collection by your refuse and recyclables collection company. We suggest that you place poison ivy in a bag (preferably paper) or separate container for recycling according to the guidelines for collection provided by your refuse and recyclables collection company. Please contact your refuse and recyclables collection company for additional details. Currently, over 100,000 tons of yard debris are recycled in the county each year. Questions about the county's recycling program can be referred to Solid Waste Management Program at 703-802-3322.

And if you wish to find out more about invasive plants, please visit the following excellent websites. They all provide a wealth of information for individuals interested in promoting native plants and removing invasives.

- **Virginia Native Plant Society:** www.vnps.org
- **Maryland Native Plant Society:** www.mdflora.org
- **Growing Native:** www.growingnative.org

Contributor: Kathy Earnest, Green Springs Gardens

Got a question? Ask a Naturalist, Historian or Master Gardener by visiting www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/resources



English Ivy:
A common
invasive plant

Fairfax County Master Gardeners Offer Free Advice for Your Gardening Problems

Why are my leaves discolored? • How do I get rid of these pests?
Why is my oak losing its leaves? • How can I improve my lawn?

Contact one of Fairfax County's Master Gardeners for information and advice on container gardening, houseplants, lawn care, weeds, animals, fruit, planting guides, annuals and perennials, landscaping, insect control and more.

Web: fairfaxmastergardeners.com • **Phone:** 703-324-8556
Email: mgfairfax@vt.edu

Happy gardening!

Huntley Meadows Nature Workbooks

The Nature Workbooks were started earlier this year by Friends of Huntley Meadows. The two workbooks include photos taken exclusively in the park. There is one for birds and one for other wildlife. Visitors can use the notebooks to identify and appreciate what they see.

A team of volunteers including Andy Higgs, Glenn Curtis, Harry Glasgow and Ken Larsen donated the initial photos used in the workbooks. Currently, there are 34 species of birds and 14 species of other wildlife. But there's a lot more room for photos. At the recent Huntley Meadows Birdathon in May, participants boasted sightings of 107 different species of birds!

Contributor: Ken Larsen

To learn more, email: info@friendsofhuntleymeadows.org

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MAIL TO: Resources/RMD, Suite 936
12055 Government Center Parkway • Fairfax, VA 22035-1118
or: subscribe through our website at
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/resources

WELCOME TO ResOURces ONLINE

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/resources

Our newly renovated website, representing the Resource Management Division (RMD) of the Park Authority and ResOURces newsletter, is now online and ready for you.

On the website, you can learn more about RMD's work to protect, preserve and interpret Fairfax County's natural and cultural heritage. You can **Visit the Sites** to see the county's beautiful nature centers and historical sites, or stop by the charming **Rental Properties** to plan your next special event. One of our many new features is **Who Do You Call?** for concerns about encroachment, wildlife, county artifacts and more. In **Nature Finder**, find out where to see county birds and flora, visit the **Wildflowers**, or check the **Almanac** for natural and astronomical events. Past issues are available for ResOURces newsletter, along with dozens of articles about county nature, history and horticulture in the **Articles Index**.

Party with Beautiful and Beneficial Bugs (Families)

HIDDEN OAKS NATURE CENTER (ANNANDALE)

Celebrate the best bugs in your yard with an afternoon of activities dedicated to butterflies, bees, ladybugs and praying mantises. Participate in tagging a monarch butterfly and decorating a paper monarch to wing its way to Mexico as part of an international symbolic monarch migration. Take home a baby beetle to release at home (with your parent's permission!) Games and crafts. Call after 8/13 for event schedule. Reservations and advanced payment required. \$5/child, \$1/adult. Sat. August 27, 1-4pm. (703)941-1065.

Goodnight Walks for Families

HIDDEN OAKS NATURE CENTER (ANNANDALE)

Each is from 7:30-8:30pm and include a night hike and indoor activities. \$3/child, \$1/adult. Sat. June 11, Sat. June 16, and Sat., Aug. 13. (703)941-1065.



Bat Fest West (All ages)

CUB RUN REC CENTER (CHANTILLY)

Bats are much-maligned creatures that should instead be celebrated for the important ecological and economic contributions they make. Enjoy a festival of nature activities, fun, and games all celebrating bats. Learn about bats at our interactive displays, make crafts to take home, play bat games and observe live bats during a presentation by Batworld NOVA. Fun for all ages! Reservations and advanced payment required. Sat., August 20. 6-8:30pm. Cost is \$3. (703)324-8523.



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